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ABSTRACT

The research reported is a descriptive normative survey utilizing the data available from the required quarterly reporting of the high school districts in Cook County. In suburban Cook County there are 27 secondary school districts and two unit districts, including Chicago. The 28 suburban secondary school districts are comprised of 68 high school buildings with a total enrollment of 159,976 students. The secondary school enrollment for the Chicago schools in September 1974 was 145,878 for the 1973-74 school year in 49 general high schools, 10 vocational high schools, 1 trade school and 1 high school for the physically handicapped. Each school district was contacted by letter in November 1973, requesting the mandated information on students who were removed from the school rolls. Each quarterly district report was due on the first school day of October, January, April and July. The requested information, according to statute, includes the names of pupils, excluding transferees, who have been expelled, have withdrawn, or have left school and have been removed from the regular attendance rolls during the period of time school was in regular session since the previous quarterly report. This study includes statistical tables, legislative history, and justification for further legislation suggesting alternative educational programs for students whose needs are not met in a typical school environment. (Author/JM)

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RESEARCH REPORT

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STUDENTS REMOVED FROM

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ROLLS

CHICAGO AND SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

#3201

A SERVICE OF
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE REGION
OF COOK COUNTY

RICHARD J. MARTWICK SUPERINTENTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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Department of Research and Statistics

UD 014 031

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the frequency of and reasons why secondary school students in the Cook County public suburban schools are removed from high school rolls. The study is based on legislation, which requires the quarterly reporting of students by school districts in Illinois to their respective Educational Service Regions. The study includes statistical tables and history of legislation, leading to justification for alternative educational programs for students whose needs are not filled by the traditional school environment.

The report was completed for publication on July 1, 1974.

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INTRODUCTION

All Illinois public schools are required, as of September 1973, to report to the county regional superintendent, the names of those students who have been removed from attendance rolls in each school district, and the reason for the removal.

This study examines the frequency of and reasons for removal and includes statistical tables, legislative history, and justification for further legislation suggesting alternative educational programs for students whose needs are not met in a typical school environment.

Truancy Hearings

On December 13 and 14, 1972, the Cook County Superintendent's office conducted hearings on juvenile truancy, suspension, and expulsion. The hearings were held in an attempt to determine the number of students out of school and to show cause for the implementation of alternative education programs found to be absent from most school district educational programs.

Through the hearings it was determined that approximately 47,000 youngsters during 1972 were truant from elementary and secondary schools in Cook County, including Chicago. It was also determined at the hearings that where there is excessive truancy there is usually a higher rate of delinquency, and that a large percentage of truants were into trouble serious enough to have police contact.

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Testimony showed that there were many students out of school, but the full extent of the problem was unknown. Accurate and full statistics were not available because:

- There was no compulsory reporting of students out of school by the various school districts,
- There was no provision in the Illinois School Code nor legislation requiring the compulsory accumulation and reporting of this information,
- There was no central information gathering agency involved in the attempted remediation of the problem.

Allegations made at the December 1972 hearings include the following:

- The primary cause for dropouts rests squarely on the educational system and its personnel.
- The majority of the truancy cases are the result of a student being turned off and turned out by the system.
- Schools are pushing out the students who fail to fit into the current school atmosphere. In some instances, a student who is fifteen years old will simply be suspended from school to remain out until he or she is sixteen years of age, at which time, with parental consent, he or she may be removed from the school rolls.
- Education is a constitutional right and that right is now being denied to thousands of students by school districts.
- Students who have special needs are being counseled out of school.

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- There is a failure of social agencies, police, courts, and the schools, to sufficiently examine the problem of why a student is out of school.

- Where there is excessive truancy, there is usually a higher rate of delinquency. [1]

Evidence from the hearings also pointed out that many students were being suspended or expelled from school with good reason. Additionally, evidence was presented that many students are "pushed out" of school, encouraged to drop out, expelled, or removed from the attendance rolls of the schools without being offered alternative education programs.

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[1]Educational Service Region of Cook County, Truancy, Suspension, Expulsion: Remarks and Excerpts of Public Hearings; December 13th and 14th, 1972, p. 1-8.

CHAPTER I

ANALYSIS OF THE TOPIC

A. Introduction

The research is a descriptive normative survey utilizing the data available from the required quarterly reporting of the high school districts in Cook County.

Since this study is concerned with high school students, the survey and report is limited to the investigatigation of secondary school districts. In suburban Cook County there are 27 secondary school districts and two unit districts, including Chicago. The 28 suburban secondary school districts are comprised of 68 high school buildings with a total enrollment of 159,976 students. The secondary school enrollment for the Chicago schools in September 1974 was 145,878 for the 1973-74 school year in 49 general high schools, ten vocational high schools, one trade school and one high school for the physically handicapped.

B. Students Removed from School Rolls - Data Gathering

Each school district was contacted by letter in November 1973, requesting the mandated information on students who were removed from the school rolls. Each quarterly district report was due on the first school day of each of the following months: October, January, April and July. The requested information, according to statute, includes the names of pupils, excluding transferees, who have been expelled, have withdrawn, or have left school and have been removed from the regular attendance rolls during the period of time

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school was in regular session since the previous quarterly report. No official reporting forms were provided for this purpose but a temporary suggested form was provided. (Appendix B)

The variables--reasons for removal of students from school attendance rolls--for which the data were sought are listed in Table I. Varied interpretations or reasons given for students out of school have led to a more specific permanent reporting form with several file categories and accompanying explanation. (see Appendix C and D)

Responses for each item in the report is given as a frequency and as a proportion of the responses to that item in Tables II and III in the data interpretation. Certain items showing significant statistics will be singled out for verbal paraphrase in a commentary on the tables.

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Table I

REASONS FOR REMOVAL OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ROLLS
GENERAL CATEGORIES

Excessive Absence

Includes chronic non-attendance, academic failure due to excessive absence, truancy, disciplinary consultation

Expulsion-Disciplinary Action by Board

Includes expulsion by principal's request, dean's request

Court Action

Includes referrals to Youth Commission or Juvenile Authorities

Personal Adjustment Problems

Includes family, personal, home problems

Economic Reasons

Includes need or desire to obtain full time employment

Lack of Interest

Includes academic indifference, behavior maladjustment, unhappy at school, unable to adjust, etc.

Health

Includes emotional, mental, physical illness, medical disability, drug abuse

Marriage/Pregnancy

Withdrawn by Parent

Emancipated (over age)

Runaway

Armed Services

Table I (continued)

Alternative Education Programs

Night school, adult education programs, young adult programs, continuation school, trade school, etc.

Other

Includes G.E.D. high school equivalency program, illegal enrollment, no reason given, etc.

The actual data collection took place from December 1973 through June 1974. All Cook County school districts were contacted by letter, reminder, telephone or in person, to collect the data.

The findings of the survey are summarized in the following section of this paper. Not included on the reporting data are students who have graduated, transferred to another public or non-public school within or out of the district or students who are suspended or truant.

Tabulations were made on the number of students reported by school district, by area and by reason students were taken off the school rolls.

C. Limitations of the Topic

An accurate up to date count of students out of school is not possible since school districts report continually for each quarter. Some districts have submitted complete reports for each quarter and other districts have reported only once or twice. This provides for a distortion in percentages and relative frequencies.

An additional limitation lies in the interpretation of the data. Since specific categories were not listed in the original reporting form sent with the letter requesting information, each school district used their own system for describing the reasons the students are off the school rolls. With a permanent, more specific reporting form using the categories mentioned in Table I, this problem will be eliminated. (see Appendix C and D for new reporting form)

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CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA ON STUDENTS REMOVED FROM THE SCHOOL ROLLS

A total of 5,279 students were reported out of school by all of the 28 responding secondary school districts in Cook County.

The reasons students were taken off the school rolls within the above mentioned general categories are listed in Table I.

The major reasons for students being taken off the school rolls, the frequency in which the reason occurred and the proportion of the responses to that item are as follows in Table II.

Table III lists the major reasons for the removal of students from the high school attendance rolls in the Chicago schools. From September 1 to June 1, 1974, 21,456 Chicago secondary school students were reported out of school.

Although the categories listed for Chicago and suburban schools are different, the major reasons students have been removed from the secondary school attendance rolls appears to be lack of interest and dropping out without known reason. In the Cook County suburban schools, 26.65% of the students were reported dropped out for lack of interest and 19.08% were absent excessively. In the Chicago public secondary schools, 79.08% of the 21,456 students were reported dropped out of school without apparent reason.

Table II

MAJOR REASONS FOR STUDENTS*

REMOVAL FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ROLLS

Note: Listed in order of frequency.

Reason	Frequency	Proportion
Lack of interest	1407	26.65%
Other (see explanation)	1015	19.23%
Excessive Absence	1007	19.08%
Working	765	14.49%
Withdrawn by Parent	182	3.45%
Armed Services	161	3.05%
Marriage/Pregnancy	161	3.05%
Health	131	2.48%
Alternative Education	113	2.14%
Personal Problems	95	1.80%
Expulsion (Disciplinary Action by Board)	92	1.74%
Court Action	71	1.34%
Runaway	69	1.31%
Emancipated (over age)	10	.19%
TOTAL	5279	100.00%
TOTAL SECONDARY ENROLLMENT	156,976	3.36%

* Cook County Suburban Public High School Students
September 1, 1973 to July 1, 1974

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TABLE III

MAJOR REASONS FOR REMOVAL

OF CHICAGO STUDENTS* FROM

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ROLLS

Note: Listed in order of frequency

Reason	Frequency 9/1 to 6/1	Proportion
Dropped Out (Not needed at Home, not entering verified employment)	9,698	45.20%
Left School - Whereabouts unknown	6,933	32.31%
Entering Verified Employment	1,797	8.38%
Dropped Out - Inability to adjust	1,486	6.93%
Military Service	422	1.97%
Needed At Home	333	1.55%
Miscellaneous - other reasons	329	1.53%
Marriage	274	1.28%
Pregnancy	184	.86%
TOTAL	21,456	100.00%
TOTAL SECONDARY ENROLLMENT	145,878	14.71%

* Chicago Public High School Students
September 1, 1973 to June 1, 1974

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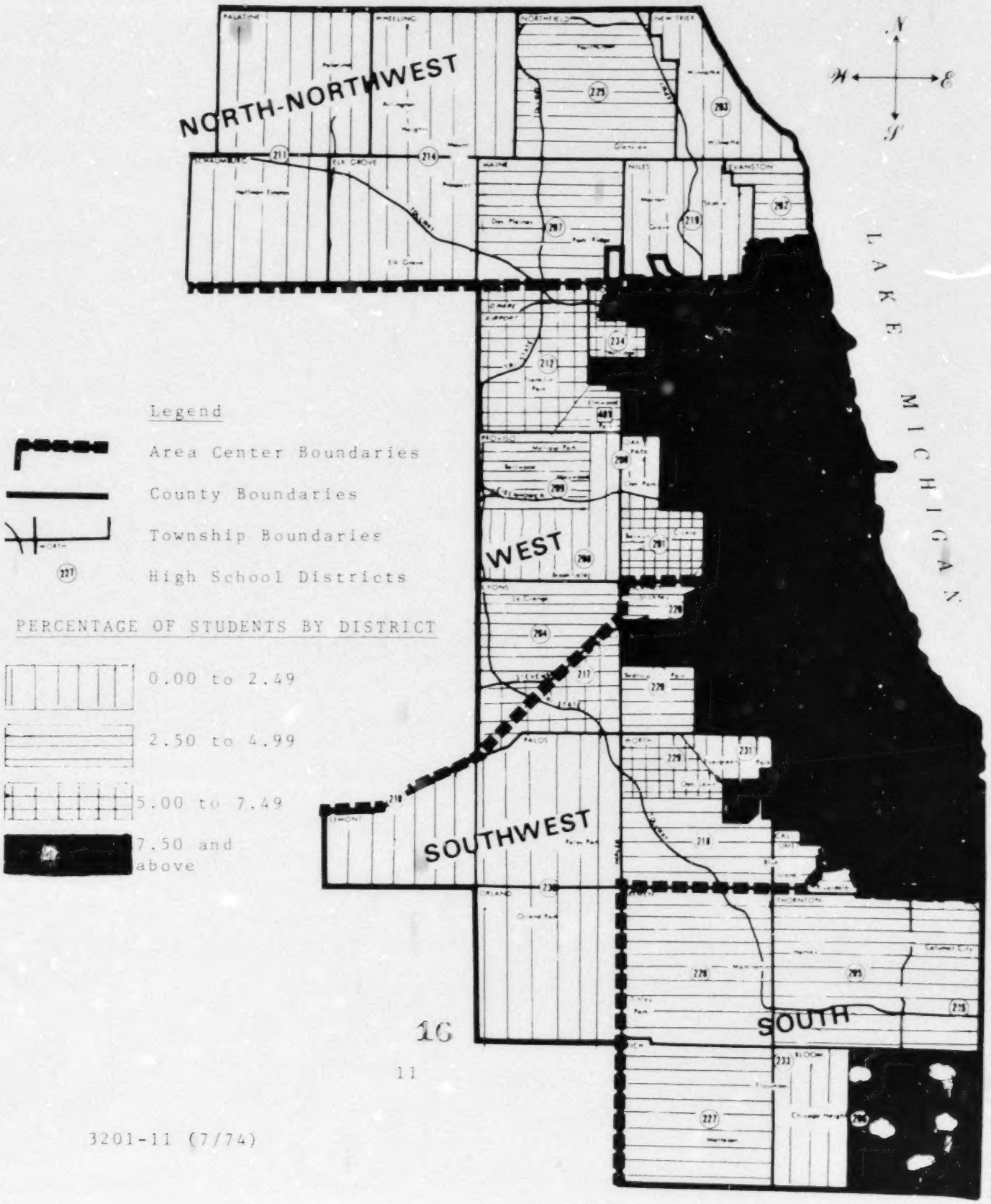
MAP OF COOK COUNTY
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS REMOVED FROM SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE ROLLS -- BY SCHOOL DISTRICT



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	North Area							West Area								Southwest Area							South Area						Total	%
District	202	203	207	211	214	219	225	200	201	204	208	209	212	234	403	10	217	218	220	229	230	231	205	206	215	227	228	233		
Lack of Interest	81		51	29	47	30	9	22		34		69	17	3	13	1	46	216	46	126	3	9	235	177	98	9		38	1407	26.65
Other	23	48		84	170	1	24	2	21	1	27	21	8	69	2		8	11			62		5	63	1	32	279	1	1015	19.23
Excessive Absence	6		65	14	93	19	39	20	180	67		55	177		11		17	1	20				2	178	21	42			1007	19.08
Withdrawn by Parent		46		4	12		26	1	12	1	11	22					1	2	3		1		25			16			182	3.45
Working--Economic Reasons	2		92	11	53	62	40	7	119	16	3	51	38		6	6	15	43	30	26	5	4	51	34	40	20		15	765	14.49
Armed Services	5		16	4	8	4	2		10	5		13	7				10	12	3	6	1	1	28	11	5	8		2	162	3.25
Marriage/ Pregnancy	1		7	2	7	3	1	7	12	3	1	9	10	1		2	11	17	8	5	3	1	12	17	11	2			161	3.05
Health	1		12	6	3	3	2	8	9	4	2	8	7		3	3	9	6	7	1			9	13	11	6		2	141	2.67
Alternative Education			52		2	1			5	1			2		1			10			1		3						115	2.18
Personal Adjustment Problems				3	10	1	2	4	1	5		7	1		1	1	14	3	3		2		24		3	11			95	1.80
Expulsion-Disciplinary Action by Board	4			4	9		1			2		6					1	1	11	3	15	1	16	1	5			1	92	1.74
Court Action	1		49	1					1			3					1	3					4		2	1			71	1.34
Runaway				2	22	1	1	3	5							3	5	13				2	5		7	1			69	1.31
Emancipated (over age)				2	5															1		1							10	.19
District Totals	126	94	342	167	443	127	127	74	377	140	44	312	267	83	37	14	137	375	112	183	81	20	431	492	184	148	279	61	5279	100.00
District Enrollment	6726	6572	11487	9451	18906	7637	5081	6216	7107	7197	1995	8450	4540	1627	1289	699	1965	7639	3088	3183	5282	1822	10680	9975	4459	4262	6742	3996	135976	
Percentage of Total Enrollment	1.66	1.43	2.98	1.77	2.34	1.66	2.50	1.76	5.30	2.69	2.21	3.69	5.88	5.16	2.87	2.00	6.97	4.91	3.63	3.94	1.53	1.10	4.04	9.89	4.10	3.47	4.14	1.62	3.36	

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CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Schools must provide alternative options for those students who are not served by the traditional school program. The public schools can provide a sufficient variety of learning environments to meet the needs of all students and provide the opportunity for each student to pursue his or her needed and desired knowledge in an environment and style in which he or she is comfortable.

Although only 3.36% of the 156,976 students in Cook County suburban secondary schools are off the school rolls for various reasons, the quantity is indeed great--5,279. In Chicago, 14.71% of the 145,878 high school students were removed from the school rolls in the first nine months of the ten month school year--21,456 students who are out of school. This amounts to a total of 26,735 school age persons who are not being served by the schools in Chicago and Cook County suburban high schools.

Certainly one of the major problems that cannot be discounted is funding. The goal of educators is to provide an adequate educational opportunity for all students. For the attainment of this goal, there is the need for funds for sufficient numbers of good teachers who are comfortable with the increased demands in alternative programs. There is constantly the necessity for expanded and renovated facilities and materials for the programs as well as for the development of adequate and appropriate career education curriculum programs.

"Lack of interest," "excessive absence," "dropping out," as reasons for removal from the school rolls, indicate the need for

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individualized and career training programs to make the schools more relevant and immediately pertinent to the world of work. An emphasis now must be on the problem of providing an education for all students, particularly those who withdraw, who are expelled or who might potentially be a school dropout. The major concern is the motivation of students and the education of students who may never have been motivated by school before.

This can be accomplished, in part, by good counseling and alternative education programs that have helped students stay in school. The most important goals being motivation and a positive self-image through both emotional and academic support.

Alternative educational programs are singularly important not only for those who want options to regular educational environments, but for those with behavior, attendance and achievement problems which occur for many reasons. Implicit in the programs to help students stay in school is the need to assist students with emotional maladjustments, providing emotional support. To provide programs for this diverse public, educational programs can and should be more flexible. Evaluations, testing and success quotients can and will have to be adapted to provide special programs to fit the specific needs of students.

For those who have already dropped out rehabilitation programs are essential, particularly those which combine education, employment skills and opportunities and counseling.

Suspensions and expulsions are also a part of the problem. In addition, there are myriad informal and extra-legal ways of encouraging children to leave school including disciplinary transfers, in-house suspensions, lack of enforcement of truancy laws, and ignoring due

process procedures. Any recommendations in the area of students out of school must deal with feasible substantive alternatives for students who find it difficult to function in regular classrooms.

Schools with flexible alternative education programs have been successful in minimizing the withdrawal of students and in increasing the possibility of success with all students.

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APPENDIX A

TEXT OF H.B. 754

ILLINOIS SCHOOL CODE. Sec. 26-3a. Report of pupils no longer enrolled in school. The clerk or secretary of the school board of all school districts shall furnish quarterly on the first school day of October, January, April and July to the regional superintendent a list of pupils, excluding transferees, who have been expelled or have withdrawn or who have left school and have been removed from the regular attendance rolls during the period of time school was in regular session from the time of the previous quarterly report. Such list shall include the names and addresses of pupils formerly in attendance, the names and addresses of persons having custody or control of such pupils, the reason, if known, such pupils are no longer in attendance and the date of removal from the attendance rolls. The regional superintendent shall inform the county or district truant officer who shall investigate to see that such pupils are in compliance with the requirements of this Article.

APPENDIX B

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE REGION OF COOK COUNTY

RICHARD J. MARTWICK, SUPERINTENDENT

Report of Student Removed from Attendance Rolls
(Temporary Form #1)

Date _____

1. District No. _____ School _____
2. Name of Student _____ Date of Birth _____
3. Address of Student _____
4. City _____ District Truant Officer _____
5. Telephone _____

CAUSE FOR REMOVAL (Check where appropriate):

6. Expulsion _____ from (date) _____ to (date) _____

   Withdrawal _____ with _____ without _____ parental consent

7. Exception (Section 26-1 of The Code) _____ Other _____

   Private or parochial school _____
   Medically certified disability _____
   Employed, in continuation school _____

8. Reason given, if known, for above (lines 6 or 7)

   _____

   _____

9. Was person having custody or control informed of responsibility under Compulsory Attendance Law? _____
10. Was alternate program offered? _____
11. Date of Removal _____
12. Parent or Guardian _____
13. Address _____
14. City _____ Telephone _____
15. Signature of District Official _____

    Position _____

3201-17 (7/74)

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE REGION
COOK COUNTY
33 West Grand Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60610

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(312) 443-7610

APPENDIX C

RICHARD J. MARTWICK
Superintendent of Schools

June 5, 1974

To: District Superintendents

From: Richard J. Martwick, Superintendent

Re: PUBLIC ACT 78-774 (HB 754)

In order to facilitate the reporting for Public Act 78-774 (HB 754), the attached form should be utilized.

When stating the reason for removal, the following number coding system should be used:

1. Lack of attendance and/or interest
2. Working
3. Health
4. Marriage and/or Pregnancy
5. Military Service
6. Expulsion
7. Other (If other, please state the reason).

As a reminder, no student should be listed who:

a. has been transferred to another public, private, or parochial school within or out of the district,
b. is truant,
c. has graduated.

If no student has been removed from the attendance rolls, a letter stating this will suffice.

Quarterly reports should be filed with this office on the first of October, January, April and July. Please forward these reports to Mr. Gene Wier, County Truant Officer (443-4588).

RJM:al
Enc.

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PUBLIC ACT 78-774 REPORT OF STUDENTS REMOVED FROM SCHOOL ROLLS

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE REGION OF COOK COUNTY

Quarterly Report

Date _____

APPENDIX D

District Number _____

District Name _____

School _____

Name of Student	Address and City	Date of Birth	Parent or Guardian	Telephone Number	Date of Removal	Reason (Use Code Number)	Please Indicate Alternate Program Offered, If Any

Code Nos. 1 - Lack of attendance and/or interest
2 - Working
3 - Health
4 - Marriage and/or Pregnancy
5 - Military Service
6 - Expulsion
7 - Other (If other, please state the reason)

Signature of School Official _____

Position _____

Date Received by ESR Office _____

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